

# **FINAL REPORT**

## **4th Mini Children and Family Services Review**

### **Northern Service Area**

**(October 12<sup>th</sup>-14th, 2010)**

# **Executive Summary**

## **Children and Family Services Review**

### **(Northern Service Area)**

A mini CFSR was held in Norfolk on October 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2010. 14 cases were reviewed. The period under review was October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 through October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. 8 cases were foster care cases and 6 were in home cases. Eight cases were abuse/neglect, two were status offender cases, and four were juvenile offender cases. The offices where the cases were reviewed from were Columbus, Dakota City, Fremont, O'Neill, Pender and Norfolk. There were 5 Health and Human Service workers that conducted this review. Second level review was completed by Quality Assurance workers Leslie Schlecht and Kathy Anstine.

#### **Background Information**

The mini CFSR is modeled after the Federal CFSR reviews and assesses the service area's performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes.

With regards to outcomes, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as Strength. Performance ratings for each of the seven outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A service area may be rated as having "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved" the outcome. The determination of whether a service area is in substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved that outcome. In order for a service area to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. The standard for substantial conformity is based on the standard set for Federal CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be acceptable. The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement; standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

A service area that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must work with their local CQI team to develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome.

#### **Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes**

The service area did not achieve substantial conformity in any of the seven CFSR outcomes. The 4<sup>th</sup> Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Northern Service Area with regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. The service area did achieve overall ratings of strength for the individual indicators pertaining to services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care (item 3), foster care re-entry (item 5), stability of foster care placement (item 6), reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives (item 8), other planned living arrangement (item 10), proximity of foster care placement (item 11), and placement with siblings (item 12).

The mini CFSR review also identified key areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 1 (children having permanency in their living situation), which was substantially achieved in only 60 percent of the cases reviewed. The lowest rating within this outcome was for item 7 (permanency goal for child), which was rated as a strength in 50 percent of the cases reviewed.

Concerns were also identified with regards to Well Being Outcome 1 (families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs), which was substantially achieved in only 50% of the cases reviewed. The lowest rating was item 20 (caseworker visits with parents)-rated as a strength in 38% of the cases reviewed.

Items with ratings of 100% strengths this round were item 3 (services to prevent removal or re-entry in foster care), item 5 (foster care re-entries), item 6 (stability of foster care placement), item 8 (reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives), item 10 (other planned living arrangement, item 11 (proximity of foster care placement), and item 12 (placement with siblings).

## KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

### I. SAFETY

*Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.*

#### Status of Safety Outcome S1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	3	60%
Partially Achieved:	1	20%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	20%
Not Applicable:	9	64%

#### **Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with child welfare agency policy. A new intake tool was implemented in 2003 which is based upon a priority response model with Priority 1 calling for a response by the worker within 24 hours of the time that the report is received by DHHS. Priority 2 designated reports are to have face to face contact with the alleged victim by Protection and Safety within 0 to 5 days from the time the intake is received and Priority 3 has a response time of 0-10 days. Data is generated monthly to ensure compliance with the response times.

#### *Review Findings:*

\*Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.

\*4 (80%) cases were rated as strengths

\*1 (20%) case was rated as area needing improvement

\*9 of the cases were not applicable

\*Three cases that were rated as strengths were out of home cases and the other one was an in home case. The case that was rated as needing improvement was an out of home case.

*Strengths: Two cases had only one intake during the period under review and the timeframes were met. The priority on those two intakes was priority 1. The other two cases that were rated as strengths did not have any intakes that were received during the period under review.*

*Areas needing improvement: In the one case needing improvement it was noted that the child victims were not interviewed within the designated time frame.*

#### **Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether there had been at least one substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment report during the period under review, and if so, whether another substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed report occurred within a 6 month period before or after the report identified. Cases were

considered not applicable for assessment if the child or family had never had a maltreatment report.

**Review Findings:**

\*Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item

\*2 (67%) cases were rated as strengths

\*1 (33%) case was rated as area needing improvement

\*11 of the cases were not applicable

\*The two cases rated as strengths on this item were out of home cases. The one case that was rated as needing improvement for this item was an out of home case.

*Strengths: In one case there was only 1 report of abuse/neglect accepted on the family during the period under review and it was referring to a previous maltreatment report that occurred before the period under review. In the other case only 1 intake was received on the family during the period under review and during the life of the case.*

*Areas needing improvement: In the one case rated as area needing improvement the Department was already involved in the case and some of the children in the home were in foster care. Four abuse/neglect reports were received in regards to the children that remained in the family home.*

*S1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were found to be substantially achieved for this outcome, the intakes received by the Department were investigated within the set time frames and face to face contact with the alleged victim was made within the timeframes. In the case found to not be achieved it was noted that the child victims listed on the intake were not interviewed within the designated time frame. Although the case plan mentioned the initial assessment being completed on this intake, no actual initial assessment was found in the case file.*

**Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.**

**Status of Safety Outcome S2**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	11	79%
Partially Achieved:	1	7%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	14%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

**Item 3. Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal**

For this item, reviewers were to assess whether in responding to a substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment report or risk of harm, the

agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent removal of children from their homes while at the same time ensuring their safety.

*Review Findings:*

**\*Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.**

**\*6 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*8 of the cases were not applicable**

**\*Three of the cases rated as strengths for this item were out of home cases and the other three were in home cases.**

*Strengths: In five cases it was noted that there were numerous services in place to prevent removal/re-entry into foster care. Those services ranged from intensive outpatient treatment to family support in the home. Other services were tracker, family therapy, transportation assistance, and intensive family preservation. In the other case the child had to be removed from the home due to immediate safety concerns.*

*There were no cases found to be needing improvement on this item.*

**Item 4. Risk of harm to child**

The assessment of Item 4 required reviewers to determine whether DHHS had made, or was making, diligent efforts to reduce the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if the agency terminated the child's parent's rights as a means of decreasing risk of harm for the child (for example, a termination of parental rights would prevent a child from being returned to a home in which the child would be at risk) and has taken action to minimize other risks to the child (for example, preventing contact with individuals who pose a risk to the child's safety). If a case is/was open for services for a reason other than a court substantiated, inconclusive, petition to be filed or unfounded report of abuse or neglect, or apparent risk of harm to the child(ren) (for example, a juvenile justice case), reviewers were to document this information and rate the item as not applicable. Note, however, that for a child (ren) noted as a "child in need of supervision" or "delinquent", reviewers were to explore and determine whether there was a risk of harm to the child, in addition to the other reasons the case may have been opened, prior to rating it as not applicable. Cases were not applicable for assessment of this item if there was no current or prior risk of harm to the children in the family.

*Review Findings:*

**\*All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.**

**\*11 (79%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*3 (21%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*0 cases were not applicable**

**\*Six of the cases rated as strengths for this item were out of home cases. Five of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases. In the three cases rated as areas needing improvement for this item, two were out of home cases and the other one was an in home case.**

*Strengths: In the 11 cases substantially achieved there were no safety concerns found on the target child. In six of the cases it was noted that ongoing safety assessments were found in the*

*case file and appropriately addressed the ongoing safety concerns. In these cases informal assessments were occurring on an ongoing basis through family team meetings.*

*Areas needing improvement: In all three cases it was noted that there were no informal/formal assessments found in the case file.*

*S2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved reviewers had a variety of comments. They ranged from the child’s placements being appropriate to meet the child’s needs, ongoing assessments being completed through family team meetings, and in eight cases there being no safety concerns or issues in the facility or home. Reviewer’s comments on the case found to be partially achieved was that while the child returned to the care of the father, there was no updated safety plan in the case file to reflect this change. In the cases that were found to be not achieved for this outcome the reviewer’s commented that in one case it was because there were no updated safety plans or assessments of ongoing safety found in the case file since July 2009. In the other case, the reviewer commented that there were no formal/informal assessments found in the case file.*

**II. PERMANENCY**

*Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.*

**Status of Permanency Outcome P1**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	4	50%
Partially Achieved:	4	50%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	6	43%

**Item 5. Foster care re-entries**

Reviewers rated this assessment Strength if during the period under review a child did not have an entry into care within a 12-month period from being discharged from another entry into foster care. Reviewers also rated this item as a Strength if a re-entry was an isolated incident during which the agency did what was reasonable to manage the risk following reunification but the child re-entered care for another reason (for example, the death of a parent). Reviewers rated this item as an Area Needing Improvement if r-entries occurring within a 12-month period were due to the same general reasons or same perpetrators. Reviewers rated this item as Not Applicable if : (1) the child entered foster care before, and remained in foster care during, the period under review; or (2) the child entered foster care before, and exited foster care during, the period under review and there was not another entry into foster care during the period under review.

**Review Findings:**

**\*Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*5 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*9 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In two cases the target child only entered foster care 1 time during the period under review and had no re-entries. In another case the child was initially placed at the Youth Regional Treatment Center, then reunified with Mom, then re-entered an out of home placement due to his behaviors. In the other two cases the target child was placed in and out of treatment level facilities due to the needs and behaviors of those children.*

*There were no files that were found to have area needing improvement for this item.*

#### **Item 6. Stability of foster care placement**

**In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement changes during the period under review, and if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs.**

#### ***Review Findings:***

**\*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*8 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*6 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In four cases the target child had only one placement change during the period under review. In two cases the children had numerous placement changes based upon behavioral and mental health issues. In one case the youth went from being home, to detention, and finally to a treatment group home due to identified mental/behavioral needs. In the last case the youth went from a shelter placement to a child specific approved foster home working towards the permanency goal of independent living.*

*There were no files that were found to have area needing improvement for this item.*

#### **Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

**In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether DHHS had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner, including filing for termination of parental rights when relevant. Reviewers examined the appropriateness of a goal that ultimately rules out adoption, guardianship, or return to family. Reviewers assessed whether the child's best interests were thoroughly considered by DHHS in setting a goal of other planned living arrangement, and that such a decision is /was continually reviewed for ongoing appropriateness. Cases were assigned a rating of Strength for this item when reviewers determined that DHHS had established an appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner. Cases were assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement when goals of reunification were not changed in a timely manner when it was apparent that reunification was unlikely to happen, termination of parental rights was not filed when the child had been foster care for 15 of the past 22 months and no compelling reasons were noted in the file, or the goal established for the child was not appropriate. Cases were identified as Not Applicable if the child was not in foster care.**

#### ***Review Findings:***

**\*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

- \*4 (50%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*4 (50%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*6 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In the four cases reviewed that were rated as strengths for this item the permanency goals were established and achieved in a timely manner.*

*Area needing improvement: In one case the goal of reunification was not changed to adoption until 28 months after being established. In another case the initial case plan was not prepared until after the 60 day requirement. In one case the permanency goal was not established until 180 days into the case. In the last case, the child has been in out of home care more than 15 out of the last 22 months and there was no evidence found in the file that a TPR (termination of parental rights) was filed.*

#### **Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives**

**In assessing these cases reviewers determined whether DHHS had achieved children's goals of reunification, guardianship or placement with relatives in a timely manner. If the goals had not been achieved in a timely manner reviewers determined whether DHHS had made diligent efforts to achieve the goals.**

#### ***Review Findings:***

- \*Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*6 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*8 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In one case reunification was achieved shortly before the period under review ended but then the child re-offended and was arrested. In another case the permanency goal of reunification was achieved 12 months and 16 days after entering care. It would have been reached sooner but two different home studies had to be completed due to the Mother relocating outside the state of Nebraska. In one case the goal of reunification was switched from the biological mother to the biological father and was successfully achieved at that point. In the last three cases the permanency goal of reunification was achieved in less than 6 months.*

*There were no cases reviewed that were found to be needing improvement for this item.*

#### **Item 9. Adoption**

**In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether appropriate and timely efforts (within 24 months of the most recent entry into foster care) had been or were being made to achieve finalized adoption.**

#### ***Review Findings:***

- \*Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*2 (67%) cases were rated as a strength**
- \*1 (33%) case was rated as area needing improvement**
- \*11 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths for this item, the goal of adoption was set within a timely manner and active efforts are being made by DHHS to achieve this goal. In one case*

*this was evident by notes in the file indicating that the children were addressing their placement questions and concerns during individual therapy sessions. In the other case it was evident that efforts were being made through workers notes made during the family team meetings. During the team meetings the worker would discuss the possibility of adoption and the issues surrounding this.*

*Area needing improvement: In the one case that this item was rated as needing improvement the goal of adoption was not established until several years after the target child was made a ward. It was noted that although the time in care was a concern it does appear that some of the issues had to do with child's behaviors which resulted in placement instability.*

**Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement**

**Reviewers determined whether the agency had made or was making diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to other planned permanent living arrangements (Independent Living, Self-Sufficiency or Family Preservation).**

**Review Findings:**

- \*One of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*1 (100%) case was rated as a strength**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*11 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: An independent living plan and the Ansell Casey assessment were found in the file as evidence of planning for the permanency goal of independent living. In the case plan there was progress noted towards achievement of this goal. At the time of case closure the youth was living independently outside the state of Nebraska.*

*There were no cases reviewed that were needing improvement for this item.*

**P1. Outcome Reviewer Comments:** *Reviewers comments on the cases found to be substantially achieved were that permanency goals were established within the set time frames and services helped to support and maintain the stability of the placements in these cases. On three cases it was noted that the case plan goal was established after the 60 day mark. In one case there was not a TPR (termination of parental rights) found in the case file.*

**Status of Permanency Outcome P2**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	4	50%
Partially Achieved:	4	50%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	6	43%

### **Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement**

Reviewers were to determine whether the child's foster care setting was in close proximity to the child's parents or close relatives. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which termination of parental rights had been completed prior to the period under review, or in which contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interest.

#### *Review Findings:*

- \*Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*7 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*7 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In five of the cases the family lives close enough to the child to facilitate visits at least a few times per month as well as attending the child's family team meetings that are being held on a monthly basis. In one case, the child was in a guardianship with an aunt, and then ran away refusing to return to her care. A child specific foster home was found and is in the same community as the aunt. However, the child refuses to have visits or any communication with the Aunt. In the last case the target child resided in the same community as the sibling up until the home study was completed on the Mother and the child returned to her care.*

*There were no cases reviewed that were needing improvement for this item.*

### **Item 12. Placement with siblings**

Reviewers were to determine whether siblings were or had been placed together and if not, was separation necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children.

#### *Review Findings:*

- \*Two of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*2 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*12 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In one case the identified child and one sibling are placed together in the same foster home, the other two siblings were not removed from the home and see each other during supervised visits weekly. In the other case the siblings were initially placed in the same foster home but due to both children's high behavioral and mental health needs it became in their best interest to separate them while maintaining regular visits.*

*There were no cases rated as needing improvement on this item.*

### **Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care**

In assessing this item reviewers determined whether DHHS had or was making diligent efforts to facilitate visitations between children in foster care and their parents and siblings. Reviewers also determined whether these visits typically occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the children and families. Non applicable cases were those where the child had no siblings in foster care, if the parents could not be located, and/or if visitation with the parents was considered not in the best interests of the child. Reviewers

rated this item for the period under review based on the individual needs of the child and family, rather than on the DHHS policy regarding visitation. The DHHS visitation guidebook recommends a minimum of one visit every two weeks between child and parent unless it would not be in the child's best interest because the parent is the perpetrator of severe physical abuse or sexual abuse. DHHS Policy requires that siblings placed separately must have a minimum of one visit per month. Other forms of communication including phone calls and letters are strongly encouraged.

*Review Findings:*

- \*Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item
- \*3 (50%) cases were rated as strengths
- \*3 (50%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement
- \*8 of the cases were not applicable

*Strengths: In all of these cases contact between parents (mother and father) and siblings in foster care was occurring anywhere from several times per week to several times per month. In one case it was noted that visits between the parents and children were occurring three to four times per week.*

*Area needing improvement: In one case there was only phone contact occurring between the parents and siblings, according to the case file. In the other two cases while contact was occurring between the mother and siblings, there was no evidence that contact was occurring between the father and the children. In these two cases it was also noted that there was no evidence found in the case file that attempts were made by the worker to locate and/or involve the father in visitation.*

**Item 14. Preserving connections**

Reviewers determined whether DHHS had or was making diligent efforts to preserve the child's primary connection and characteristics while in foster care. Reviewers had to make a professional judgment about the child's primary connections and then explore whether those connections have been preserved through case planning and service delivery.

*Review Findings:*

- \*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item
- \*7 (88%) cases were rated as strengths
- \*1 (13%) of the cases was rated as area needing improvement
- \*6 of the cases were not applicable

*Strengths: In all the cases connections were maintained through extended family visits and/or holiday celebrations. ICWA was addressed in all of the cases. In one case it was noted that the child was placed in a child specific foster home within his/her community and was able to continue going to the same learning center as he/she was before entering foster care. In another case it was noted that the child was able to continue going to the same daycare provider because that provider became this child's foster care provider as well.*

*Area needing improvement: In this case it was noted that the case file lacked documentation showing that there were active efforts to preserve connections.*

### **Item 15. Relative placement**

Reviewers had to focus on the title IV-E provision that requires States to consider giving preference to placing the child with relatives, and determine whether the State considered such a placement and how (for example, seeking out and evaluating the child's relatives). Relatives include non-custodial parents, such as fathers not in the home, if applicable to the case. Reviewers had to determine the extent to which the agency identified relatives who had some reasonable degree of relationship with the child and with whom the child might reside. There did not need to be in the case record a formal evaluation of relatives with whom the child might reside, but for reviewers to have answered "yes" evidence must exist, through either the case documentation or the case interviews, that relatives were evaluated and considered. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if (1) the agency assessed the child's needs and determined that he/she required special services *and* (2) the agency assessed potential relative placements and determined that the relative placements did not have the capacity to meet the child's needs. Reviewers rated this item as a strength unless no efforts were made to locate or identify relatives for placement, or placement with a family known to the child. Reviewers rated this item as not applicable if (1) the agency determined upon the child's initial entry into care that his/her needs required residential treatment services and a relative placement would be inappropriate, or (2) if relatives were unable to be identified despite the agency's diligent efforts to do so, or in situations such as abandonment in which the identity of the parents and relatives remains unknown despite efforts to identify them. Reviewers were to check not applicable if the child was placed with relatives.

#### ***Review Findings:***

- \*Four of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*1 (25%) cases was rated as a strength**
- \*3 (75%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*10 of the cases were not applicable**

***Strengths: In the one case rated as a strength the children were placed with a maternal relative prior to the period under review. Paternal relatives were sought out but found to be not appropriate for placement.***

***Area needing improvement: In one case there was no evidence found in the case file that the worker sought out paternal relatives as possible placement. In the other two cases there was no evidence found in the case file that either maternal or paternal relatives were sought out as possible placement.***

### **Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

In assessing this item, reviewers determined if there was evidence of a strong, emotionally supportive relationship between the child in foster care and the child's parents during the period under review. Reviewers assigned a rating of Strength for this item when there was evidence of regular visitation between parent and child. Reviewers assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement when they determined the agency had not made diligent efforts to support the child's relationship with the father or mother. A case was considered not applicable if a relationship with the child's parents was contrary to the child's safety or best interest during the period under review.

#### ***Review Findings:***

- \*Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*3 (43%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*4 (57%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*7 of the cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In two cases that were rated as strengths for this item it was specifically noted that both the parents and child were involved in monthly family team meetings. In one case the mother had relinquished her parental rights during the period under review but the father was very involved in the case activities and the child's life. In all the cases the youth had visits with their parents in the parental home and were involved in their own community functions: such as church and family gatherings.*

*Area needing improvement: In three cases it was noted that there was no documentation found in the case file to show that concerted efforts were made to locate, promote and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his/her father. In one case it was noted that there was no documentation found in the case file to indicate efforts were made to locate the father or mother.*

*P2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases where this outcome was determined to be substantially achieved reviewers commented that visitation was occurring on a regular basis (at least monthly). It was also noted that ICWA was addressed in these cases. In three of the cases where this outcome was only partially achieved the reviewers commented that there were no documented efforts found to show that the DHHS worker made concerted efforts to locate the fathers in those cases. In one case comments made were that there were no efforts made to find the mother or father. The child in that case had been residing with a maternal Aunt but had ran away from that home and refused to return or maintain a relationship with that Aunt.*

### III. WELL-BEING

*Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.*

#### Status of Well-Being Outcome WB1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	7	50%
Partially Achieved:	6	43%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	7%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

#### **Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents**

**In assessing item 17, reviewers were to determine whether DHHS adequately assessed the needs of children, parents and foster parents AND provided the services to meet those needs. Reviewers rated item 17 as a strength if (1) a needs assessment was conducted for the child(ren), parents, and foster parents, and (2) appropriate services were provided in relation to the identified needs of the target child in foster care cases, or for all children in in-home cases. Education and physical or mental health services to the target child were**

not rated for this item (these are rated in items 21, 22, and 23). Reviewers had to document whether these services were provided to parents.

***Review Findings:***

**\*All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*7 (50%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*7 (50%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*Four of the cases rated as strengths were in home cases and three were out of home cases. Two of the cases rated as area needing improvement were in home cases and five were out of home cases.**

*Strengths: Because 17 is broke down into parts A, B, and C. This item will be broken out into three pieces.*

**CHILDREN**

***17a. Strengths: The child's needs and services were both informally and formally assessed and addressed through initial assessments, case management and family team meetings. Some of the services provided to address the identified needs were behavioral assessments, Developmental Disabilities assessments, Electronic Monitoring, Family Support, individual and family therapy and tracker services.***

***17a. Area needing improvement: In the one case that was rated as needing improvement it was noted that the other children remaining in the home did not have their needs assessed or addressed.***

**PARENTS**

***17b. Strengths: It was noted that the worker did a good job assessing both parents' needs by conducting informal/formal assessments. Informal assessments were completed through face to face contact and family team meetings. Comprehensive Family Assessments were also completed. Some of the services offered to address the identified needs were transportation assistance, drug/alcohol treatment, family support services, parenting classes and therapy.***

***17b. Area needing improvement: In four cases it was noted that while the mother's needs had been assessed and addressed, the father's needs had not been assessed. In two cases it was noted there was no information found to indicate that either parents needs had been assessed. In one case the mother's needs were not assessed. In that case the worker reported during the interview that the mother was never met with face to face, only via phone. No reason as to why was given.***

**FOSTER PARENTS**

***17c. Strengths: In the cases reviewed rated as strengths it was noted that the foster parent's needs were assessed by the worker discussing with the foster parent's their concerns/needs. Needs were also assessed through monthly family team meetings. Services provided were foster care payments, respite care and parenting assistance in dealing with children that have behavioral issues.***

***17c. Area needing improvement: There were no cases that were rated as needing improvement on this item.***

### **Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning**

**In assessing this item reviewers were to determine whether the agency actively involved the parent(s), guardian, child(ren) and other people identified by the family in the case planning activities relevant to the current case plan. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent (guardian) and the child (older than 8 and not incapacitated) had actively participated in identifying the services and goals for the case plan.**

#### ***Review Findings:***

**\*All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*7 (50%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*7 (50%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*In the seven cases rated as strengths four were in home cases and three were out of home cases. In the seven cases that were rated as area needing improvement two were in home cases and five were out of home cases.**

***Strengths: In six of the seven cases that were rated as strengths for this item it was specifically noted that both parents and child (when old enough) participated in the case planning process through monthly family team meetings as well as through monthly face to face contact with the case worker. In one case the mothers parental rights were terminated so it was just the father that was involved in the case planning process through monthly family team meetings and face to face contact with the case worker.***

***Area needing improvement: In three of the seven cases rated as needing improvement for this item it was noted that there was no documentation found in the case file to indicate that the mother was involved in the case planning. In the other four cases there was no documentation to indicate that active efforts were made to locate the father and include him in the case planning process.***

### **Item 19. Worker visits with child**

**Reviewers were to determine the typical pattern of visits between the worker and child and if these visits were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well being. Reviewers were also to determine whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and achievement of the goals.**

#### ***Review Findings:***

**\*All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*11 (79%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*3 (21%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**Six of the cases rated as a strength for this item were in home cases and five were out of home. The three cases rated as needing improvement were out of home cases.**

***Strengths: There was found to be at least monthly contacts between the worker and the child occurring. The quality of those narratives addressed permanency, safety and well being issues.***

***Area needing improvement: In the three cases rated as needing improvement it was noted in that the file lacked contact documentation and the child was not seen monthly. In two cases***

*the visits between the worker and child were not private. In one case it was noted that the narratives were not of quality: meaning they did not address safety, permanency and well being issues.*

**Item 20. Worker visits with parents**

Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker had sufficient face to face contact with parents to encourage attainment of their children's permanency goal while ensuring safety and well being. Cases that were considered not applicable if there is no plan for further involvement between the parents and the agency or the parents and the child, and the child is not in a permanent home.

***Review Findings:***

**\*13 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*5 (38%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*8 (62%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*1 case was not applicable**

**\*Three of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases and two were out of home cases. Three of the cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were in home cases and five were out of home cases.**

***Strengths: Visits between worker and parents (mother and father) were occurring at least monthly. The quality of the contact narratives was noted to be very good and addressed the permanency, safety, and well being of the child.***

***Area needing improvement: In six of the seven cases rated as area needing improvement on this item it was noted that caseworker visits with the mother were occurring on a monthly basis and the contact narratives reflected that permanency, safety and well being were discussed. However, in these six cases there was little to no contact occurring between the caseworker and the father. In one case it was noted that there was no documentation found to indicate worker visited with either parent. In the other case the worker never met with the mother. This was confirmed through case interviews and the case file review.***

***WB1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved that extensive efforts were made by the Department to ensure the families had the capacity to provide for their children's needs and were assessed formally and informally through ongoing assessments and mental health assessments. Families participated in therapy, family support, utilization of respite care when needed, communication during visits with caseworkers, and involvement in the case planning process. Families got involved in the case planning process through monthly contacts with the DHHS worker and through family team meetings. In the cases where this outcome was found to be partially achieved reviewers commented that in five cases the father was never located by DHHS. In one case the mother's needs were never assessed/addressed. In the case that was rated as not achieved the reviewer commented that there was no documented efforts found in the case file that the worker attempted to locate the mother and father.***

**Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	8	67%
Partially Achieved:	1	8%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	25%
Not Applicable:	2	14%

**Item 21. Educational needs of the child**

When addressing educational issues for families receiving in-home services, reviewers considered whether the educational needs are/were relevant to the reason why the agency is/was involved with the family, and whether the need to address educational issues is/was a reasonable expectation given the circumstances of the agency's involvement with the family. (If not, reviewers rated item 21 as not applicable.) Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if (1) the agency made extensive efforts to address the child's educational needs and the school system was unresponsive, especially if the problems are with a local school or jurisdiction; (2) if the child(ren)'s educational needs were assessed and addressed, including cases where the educational records were missing and the reasons why; or (3) if the agency conducted an assessment of educational issues and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for educational services.

***Review Findings:***

**\*Twelve of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*8 (67%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*4 (33%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*2 of the cases were not applicable**

**\* Two of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases and six were out of home cases. Two cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were in home cases and the other two were out of home cases.**

***Strengths: Educational needs of the child were assessed and addressed by the case worker by providing educational testing and monitoring at the schools they attended. Services provided to address the needs found ranged from IEP's, an ESU referral, and assisting with getting a GED. Grade/report cards were found in the case file.***

***Area needing improvement: In one case there was no documentation found in the file to indicate that the other child in the home had their educational needs assessed/addressed. In***

*one case there were no educational records found in the case file. In two cases there was no information regarding any assessments of needs being completed.*

*WB2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the outcomes found to be substantially achieved that the children received appropriate services to meet their educational needs when needs were identified and IEP/GED material was found in the case file. In the one case that was found to be partially achieved the reviewer commented it was because there was a recommendation for further testing after the IEP was completed, but no evidence was found in the file that this occurred. In one case there was no documentation found in the file regarding grade reports of any kind. In one case there was a recommendation given that the child have a tutor; however nothing was found in the case file that this occurred. In one of the cases there were no educational record/information found in the case file on the other children residing in the family home.*

*Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.*

**Status of Well-Being Outcome WB3:**

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	9	69%
Partially Achieved:	3	23%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	8%
Not Applicable:	1	7%

**Item 22. Physical health of the child**

When addressing health issues for families receiving in-home services, reviewers considered whether the physical health needs are/were relevant to the reason why the agency is/was involved with the family and whether the need to address physical health issues is/was a reasonable expectation given the circumstances of the agency’s involvement with the family. (If not, reviewers rated this item as not applicable.) For example, if a child became known to the agency and was determined to be in need of in-home services at least partly as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse, then it is reasonable to expect the agency to provide services to ensure that the child receives the appropriate physical health services. Reviewers rated this item as a strength if the agency conducted an assessment of physical health and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for physical health services.

***Review Findings:***

- \*Ten of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*6 (60%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*4 (40%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*4 of the cases were not applicable**

**\* In the six cases rated as strength for this item all were out of home cases. Two cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were out of home cases and the other two were in home cases.**

*Strengths: Medical/dental needs were assessed, services were provided when needed and it was documented in the case file.*

*Area needing improvement: One case lacked both physical and dental exam information. In one case the other siblings residing in the home did not have physical/dental needs assessed/addressed. In two cases there were no records of dental appointments.*

### **Item 23. Mental health of the child**

Reviewers were to determine whether during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child (ren). Reviewers rated this item as a strength if the agency conducted an assessment of the child's mental health and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for mental health services. If there was a need for services then they were offered.

#### ***Review Findings:***

**\*Twelve of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*11 (92%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*1 (8%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*2 of the cases were not applicable**

**\*Four cases rated as a strength for this item were in home cases and seven were out of home cases. The one case rated as area needing improvement for this item was an in home case.**

*Strengths: Initial and ongoing formal/informal assessments were being conducted on the child ranging from the Youth Level of Service evaluation to the Comprehensive Family Assessment. Informal assessments were completed by the DHHS worker through monthly family team meetings and face to face contacts with the youth.*

*Area Needing Improvement: Mental health needs were not assessed/addressed on the other siblings residing in the home.*

***WB3. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the outcomes found to be substantially achieved that mental health needs were assessed and if there were needs identified that they were also addressed. There was also medical/dental/mental health documentation found in the case file. On the cases found to be partially achieved reviewers commented that in two cases there were no updates in the case file in regards to dental exams. In the one case found to not be achieved the reviewer commented that it was because there was no evidence found in the file that the other children had their mental, vision, dental and physical needs assessed/addressed. .***

## NSA Results

**Case Sample:** *Mini CFSR Review – October 2010*

**Type of Review:** *4th Mini CFSR*

**Report Type:** *Northern Service Area*

**Number of Reviews:** *14*

**Review Period:** *October 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2010*

### Performance Item Results

S = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

N/A = Not Applicable

Performance Item	S	ANI	N/A	S (%)	ANI (%)	N/A (%)	Total
Number of Submitted Review:							14
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	4	1	9	80	20	64	14
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	2	1	11	67	33	79	14
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	6	0	8	100	0	57	14
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	11	3		79	21		14
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	5	0	9	100	0	64	14
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	8	0	6	100	0	43	14
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	4	4	6	50	50	43	14
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	6	0	8	100	0	57	14
Item 9: Adoption	2	1	11	67	33	79	14
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement	1	0	13	100	0	93	14
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	7	0	7	100	0	50	14
Item 12: Placement with siblings	2	0	12	100	0	86	14
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	3	3	8	50	50	57	14
Item 14: Preserving connections	7	1	6	88	13	43	14
Item 15: Relative placement	1	3	10	25	75	71	14
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	3	4	7	43	57	50	14
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	7	7		50	50		14
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	7	7	0	50	50	0	14
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	11	3		79	21		14
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parent(s)	5	8	1	38	62	7	14
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	8	4	2	67	33	14	14

Item 22: Physical health of child	6	4	4	60	40	29	14
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	11	1	2	92	8	14	14

SA = Substantially Achieved (%)

PA = Partially Achieved (%)

NACH = Not Achieved (%)

N/A = Not Applicable

Performance Outcome	SA	PA	NACH	N/A	SA (%)	PA (%)	NACH (%)	N/A (%)	Total
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	3	1	1	9	60	20	20	64	14
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	11	1	2	0	79	7	14	0	14
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	4	4	0	6	50	50	0	43	14
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	4	4	0	6	50	50	0	43	14
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	7	6	1	0	50	43	7	0	14
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	8	1	3	2	67	8	25	14	14
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	9	3	1	1	69	23	8	7	14